From:	Gilead Ini
To:	Gilead Ini
Subject:	BDS Resolution/Hewlett-Packard
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Dear City Council Members,

I would have liked to address you during Monday's meeting, but since I'll be out of town, I hope you'll consider my brief thoughts on, and strong opposition to, Cambridge's proposed participation in the anti-Israel boycott movement.

For most of the past decade I lived on Trowbridge Street in Mid-Cambridge. And while I now live down the road in Medford, the proposed resolution targeting Hewlett-Packard and Israel still affects me as your neighbor, as a Jew, and as a first-generation American whose father immigrated to the U.S. after fleeing anti-Jewish persecution in Baghdad.

When I see Israel singled out like this — when I see the largest community and greatest concentration of Jews in the world singled out like this — I often think of how it felt for my father and his family when they were singled out for persecution by Iraqis who were too quick to notice fault with their Jewish neighbors, whose purported crime was living life no differently than the rest of the community. I think of how it might feel for a person of color on Trowbridge Street, or in Huron Village, or at a Starbucks in Central Square, if his neighbors rallied to punish, prosecute, or persecute him for alleged offenses, without scrutiny of the purported evidence, and for actions that when taken by white Cantabrigians go unnoticed. Such is the singling out of Israel for its attempts to protect its citizens — attempts that have unfortunately required military action to stop rocket fire, but that have also included intensive negotiations with and wide-ranging peace offers to Palestinian leaders.

Forty years ago, a letter about Israel was signed by Rosa Parks, Bayard Rustin, Coretta Scott King, A. Philip Randolph, Tom Bradley, Dorothy Height, Roy Wilkins, and many other other top icons of the civil rights movement. The letter's first point was that "We condemn the anti-Jewish 'blacklist,'" a reference to a boycott efforts by Mideast dictators targeting Israel and the Jews. "Having suffered so greatly from such prejudice, we consider most repugnant efforts by Arab states to use the economic power of their newly acquired oil wealth to boycott business firms that deal with Israel," they wrote.

Equally relevant was their forceful defense of Zionism and Israel's right to exist. "We support democratic Israel's right to exist. The democratic values that have sustained our struggle in America are also the source of our admiration for Israel and her impressive social achievements," they wrote. "No nation is without imperfections. But Israel's are far outweighed by the freedom of her democratic society." This passage is relevant is because, today, the BDS movement that calls for boycotting HP and Israel is open about its ultimate target: not Israeli policies; not Israel's conduct in past wars with Hamas; but rather, the right of the Jewish people to a homeland.

Don't take my word for it. Omar Barghouti, a founder of the BDS movement, has admitted that he seeks to replace Israel with "a unitary state, **where, by definition, Jews will be a minority.**" That goal of rendering Jews a minority is no more progressive than the desire of some Americans who want to reverse time so that their black neighbors remain a powerless minority in U.S. cities.

So in urging you to reject the proposed resolution, I stand with Rosa Parks; I stand with Barak Obama, who firmly opposed anti-Zionism and, in February 2016, directed his administration "to strongly oppose boycotts, divestment campaigns, and sanctions targeting the State of Israel"; I stand with Deval Patrick, who lauded the beneficial economic relationships between Boston and Israel; I stand with Joe Kennedy, whose spokeswoman last year noted, "Congressman Kennedy firmly opposes the BDS movement which seeks to isolate and undermine one of our closest global allies"; and I stand with most Massachusetts residents who reject diverting city government resources to participate in a dishonest, unfair, and divisive campaign singling out one country, and one people.

With thanks,

Gilead Ini